

Message Text

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TAGS: SHUM, SREF, PFOR, CI
SUBJ: CORVALAN RELEASE: THE GOC DRAWS LESSONS

REF: SANTIAGO 11925

1. THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT IS PORTRAYING THE LINKED RELEASES OF PCCH LEADER CORVALAN AND SOVIET DISSIDENT BUKOVSKY AS A GREAT VICTORY FOR CHILE AND PROOF THAT THE SOVIETS RESPECT A TOUGH POSITION. IT SAYS THAT THE EVENT REVEALS THE PUPPETMASTER RELATIONSHIP THE SOVIETS HAVE WITH THEIR PROXIES IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY MUST GO TO GUARANTEE THESE LEADERS' SAFETY. THE US RECEIVES CREDIT FOR A HELPFUL ROLE AS INTERMEDIARY; CUBA TAKES ITS LICKS.

2. "WE WON. WE WON RIGHT DOWN THE LINE," A HAPPY PRESIDENT PINOCHET TOLD "EL MERCUIRO" IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW DECEMBER 18. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT THE RELEASES DEMONSTRATED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) COMMUNISTS EVERYWHERE "NEVER HAVE BEEN INDEPENDENT, THEY ARE AGENTS AND SERVANTS OF MOSCOW WHO
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JUST FOLLOW ORDERS." FOR PROOF HE CITED CORVALAN'S INITIAL DISINTEREST IN LINKED RELEASES (SANTIAGO 11708) WITH HIS READINESS TO ACCEPT THE DEAL ONCE THE SOVIETS AGREED;

(B) THE SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE FOR CORVALAN SHOWED THAT HE IS THEIR AGENT ("EL MERCURIO" SUBSEQUENTLY

EMBROIDERED THIS POINT IN AN EDITORIAL, NOTING THAT "HIGH LEVEL COMMUNISTS STRIVE TO BEHAVE AS IF THEY ENJOY A CERTAIN DEGREE OF IMMUNITY AND PROTECTION.... THE LOSS OF SOVIET FACE IN SPRINGING CORVALAN WAS THE PRICE THEY HAD TO PAY TO KEEP UP MORAL OF OTHER COMMUNIST LEADERS.")

(C) SOVIET CAPITULATION PROVES "THE ADVANTAGES OF A HARD LINE... WE WON BECAUSE WE HUNG TOUGH."

(D) "FIDEL CASTRO HAS A REAL PROBLEM NOW."

3. PINOCHET, IN DESCRIBING THE US ROLE, SAID: "WE ASKED THE US, THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO SERVE AS GUARANTORS ('MINISTROS DE FE') AND VOUCH FOR OUR SERIOUSNESS AS WELL AS TO INSURE COMPLIANCE BY THE RUSSIAN NEGOTIATORS. I THINK THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL FOR US TO HAVE THE US SERVE IN THIS ROLE. OTHER COUNTRIES OFFERED THEMSELVES AS MEDIATORS, BUT WE PREFERRED THE IMPARTIAL AND UNCOMPROMISED HELP OF THE UNITED STATES."

4. PINOCHET CONCLUDED ON A NOTE OF CAUTION: "THIS GREAT TRIUMPH SHOULD NOT LULL US INTO DROPPING OUR GUARD. ON THE CONTRARY, VIGILANCE IS MORE NECESSARY THAN EVER."

5. MEDIA COVERAGE WAS MASSIVE. TELEVISION AND RADIO CARRIED THE GOC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RELEASE REPEATEDLY ON DECEMBER 18. THE STORY OVESHADOWED EVEN THE DAVIS CUP CHAMPIONSHIP. EDITORIAL COMMENT MIRRORED PRESIDENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PINOCHET'S OBSERVATIONS.

6. COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER SENIOR GOC OFFICIALS FOLLOWED ESSENTIALLY THE SAME LINE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS.

7. THE CHILEAN EXPLANATION OF THE SOVIET DECISION TO RELEASE BUKOVSKY IS LESS THAN SATISFYING. WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S JUDGMENT ON SOVIET MOTIVATION. POPPER

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